

Seven Steps to Getting Started With Goal Setting

You know goal setting is important. And you know it will help you get where you want to go, most likely, much faster.

Everyone knows this.

Yet, I can say with a high level of confidence that most people reading this article don't regularly set goals.

There are lots of reasons for this gap between knowing and doing. It could be procrastination or fear (of failure or success); lack of a process or an ongoing search for the perfect process. Whatever the reason, this article will help you get off your "buts" and get started with goal setting.

The Seven Steps

1. **Decide and do.** The first step is a decision. You've probably decided in the past that you were going to set goals, but then something came up, or you got scared, or you had a business trip, or you had pressing family matters, or you wanted to buy another book on the subject. Enough! Decide to do it (again). And this time you will do it, starting with step two.
2. **Make a list.** Brainstorm all of the things your heart desires. Consider all areas and facets of your life. Always wanted to attend a State Dinner at the White House? Write it down. Own a Bentley? Write it down. Go to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Write it down. Have a goal weight in your mind? Write it down. You get the idea. Big or small, tangible or intangible, personal or professional, just write them down! Keep this list and know that you can add to it any time you wish. Once you have a good number written down (at least 20 ideas would be a good start – 50 or 100 would be better) move to step three.
3. **Pick from passion.** Read over your list. What jumps off the page at you? What stirs your soul? Highlight or circle one or two of these items. They may be long or short term, it doesn't really matter too much – just follow your heart or intuition to pick which goals you are going to start with.
4. **Pick a process.** Thousands of books, tools and tapes exist on goal setting. While there are principles that you will read over and over, there are nuances to each process. Any of them will work if you work with them. It doesn't matter which one you pick, just pick one. Begin to apply the steps in that process to the 1-2 goals you selected in step three.
5. **Let go of perfect.** One of the major stumbling blocks for people is that they think they have to follow the process perfectly or do everything perfectly. It won't happen perfectly and according to your plan. But if you begin to work your plan great things WILL happen. In the end this exercise is about the destination, not the journey. Let go of perfect and get going.

6. **Build an action plan.** Whatever goal setting process you have selected, it will include action planning. Setting a goal is one thing, but then you must have a plan for how you will get there. If one of more of the goals you selected above is a long term goal, build an interim step and build the plan to that interim step or stage. Make sure your plan has clear and actionable steps.
7. **Take the first step.** Step one urges you to decide and do. You have another decision to make now. You have some goals and you have a plan – congratulations having goals and steps are great! But they're not enough. They don't matter at all if you don't actually take the real first steps in your plan. Perhaps you have gotten to this step before only to be stymied. It is time to get past that and achieve your goals. Take your first step. Right now.

These steps will absolutely work, but only if you take them. Goal setting is great; goal achieving is even greater. Now is the time. Your desired future awaits.

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